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Massive winter storm brings frigid temps, snow and ice to U.S.



Rows of headstones at the North Dakota Veterans Cemetery are blanketed by drifting snow Thursday, Dec. 22, 2022, in Mandan, N.D.

Associated Press

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Aruba Airport Authority N.V to operate General Aviation Terminal at Aeropuerto Internacional Reina Beatrix



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Massive winter storm brings frigid temps, snow and ice to U.S.

By **HEATHER HOLLINGSWORTH** and **JILL BLEED**
Associated Press

MISSION, Kan. (AP) — Tens of millions of Americans endured bone-chilling temperatures, blizzard conditions, power outages and canceled holiday gatherings Friday from a winter storm that forecasters said was nearly unprecedented in its scope, exposing about 60% of the U.S. population to some sort of winter weather advisory or warning.

More than 200 million people were under an advisory or warning on Friday, the National Weather Service said. The weather service's map "depicts one of the greatest extents of winter weather warnings and advisories ever," forecasters said.

Power outages have left more than 1.4 million homes and businesses in the dark, according to the website PowerOutage, which tracks utility reports.

And more than 4,100 flights within, into or out of the U.S. were canceled Friday, according to the tracking site FlightAware, causing more mayhem as travelers try to make it home for the holidays. Some airports, including Seattle-Tacoma International Airport, closed runways.

The huge storm stretched from border to border. In Canada, WestJet canceled all flights Friday at Toronto Pearson International Airport, beginning at 9 a.m. And in Mexico, migrants waited near the U.S. border in unusually cold temperatures as they awaited a U.S. Supreme Court decision on whether and when to lift pandemic-era restrictions that prevent many from seeking asylum.

Forecasters said a bomb cyclone — when atmospheric pressure drops very quickly in a strong storm — had developed near the Great Lakes, stirring up blizzard conditions, including heavy winds and snow.

"The impacts are perhaps far greater than they might be in the middle of winter during a typical weekend without a holiday," said



Information signs are seen Terminal 3 at O'Hare International Airport in Chicago, Thursday, Dec. 22, 2022.

Greg Carbin, chief of forecast operations for the Weather Prediction Center at the National Weather Service, noting that while the blizzard conditions and Arctic air may set some records, the storm isn't unprecedented.

Even though fleets of snow plows and salt trucks have been deployed, driving was hazardous and sometimes deadly. A Kansas City, Missouri, driver died Thursday after skidding into a creek. And in the Chicago suburb of Des Plaines, a pickup truck driver was hospitalized after sliding into a pond.

State police in Michigan said in tweets that nine tractor-trailers crashed on Interstate 94 in Berrien County in the western part of the state.

Activists also were rushing to get the homeless out of the cold. Nearly 170 adults and children were keeping warm early Friday in Detroit at a shelter and a warming center that are designed to hold 100 people.

"This is a lot of extra people"

but "you can't" turn anyone away, said Faith Fowler, the executive director of Cass Community Social Services, which runs both facilities.

In Chicago, Andy Robledo planned to spend the day organizing efforts to check on unhoused people through his nonprofit, Feeding People Through Plants. Robledo and volunteers build tents modeled on ice-fishing tents, including a plywood subfloor.

"It's not a house, it's not an apartment, it's not a hotel room. But it's a huge step up from what they had before," Robledo said.

In Portland, Oregon, officials opened five emergency shelters. Fallen trees and power lines have closed roads across the Portland metro area. And nearly 50 miles (80 kilometers) of Interstate 84, a major highway through the Columbia River Gorge, were closed Friday morning.

All bus service was suspended in the greater Seattle area Friday morning due to an ice storm that made travel treacherous.

In far northern Indiana, lake-effect snow rolling off Lake Michigan could boost storm totals to well over a foot in some areas by Sunday, said Mark Steinwedel, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Syracuse, Indiana.

"It's really going to add up," he said, predicting "pretty awful travel."

The weather service is forecasting the coldest Christmas in more than two decades in Philadelphia, where school officials shifted classes online Friday.

In South Dakota, Gov. Kristi Noem late Thursday activated the state's National Guard to haul firewood from the Black Hills Forest Service to the Rosebud Sioux Tribe as some members were stranded in their homes with dwindling fuel. Other tribes also were struggling, including the Oglala Sioux Tribe in the western part of the state, which was using snowmobiles to reach members who live at the end of miles-long dirt roads.

But with the vehicles break-

ing down in the 10-foot drifts, officials were considering using horses to deliver essentials to some homes. Tribal officials have reached out to the Federal Emergency Management Agency for help.

"It's been one heck of a fight so far," said tribal President Frank Star Comes Out. In Maine, gusts approaching 70 mph (113 kph) were reported along the coast Friday morning. Atop New Hampshire's Mount Washington, the tallest peak in the Northeast, the wind topped 130 mph (210 kph). The governor closed state offices, ferry service to Casco Bay islands was suspended and flooding was leading to some water rescues.

The cold was putting a strain on utilities. The nation's largest public utility asked businesses and the public in a tweet to reduce usage as much as possible without sacrificing safety. The Tennessee Valley Authority, which provides electricity to 10 million people in Tennessee and parts of the surrounding states of Alabama, Mississippi, Kentucky, Georgia, North Carolina and Virginia, also warned that there may be brief, intermittent power outages.

It was so bad in Vermont that Amtrak canceled service for the day, and non-essential state offices were closing early.

"I'm hearing from crews who are seeing grown trees ripped out by the roots," Mari McClure, president of Green Mountain Power, the state's largest utility, said at a news conference. In eastern Iowa, sports broadcaster Mark Woodley became a Twitter sensation after he was called on to do live stand ups in the wind and snow because sporting events were called off. By midday Friday, a compilation of his TV stand-ups had been viewed nearly 5 million times on Twitter.

"I've got good news and I've got bad news," he told an anchor. "The good news is that I can still feel my face right now. The bad news is, I kind of wish I couldn't." □

Associated Press

Congress approves new election rules in Jan. 6 response

By NICHOLAS RICCARDI
Associated Press

Congress on Friday gave final passage to legislation changing the arcane law that governs the certification of a presidential contest, the strongest effort yet to avoid a repeat of Donald Trump's violence-inflaming push to reverse his loss in the 2020 election. The House passed an overhaul of the Electoral Count Act as part of its massive, end-of-the-year spending bill, after the Senate approved identical wording Thursday. The legislation now goes to President Joe Biden for his signature.

Biden hailed the provisions' inclusion in the spending bill in a statement Friday, calling it "critical bipartisan action that will help ensure that the will of the people is preserved."

It's the most significant legislative response Congress has made yet to Trump's aggressive efforts to upend the popular vote, and a step that been urged by the House select committee that conducted the most thorough investigation into the violent siege of the Capitol.

The provisions amending



In this image released in the final report by the House select committee investigating the Jan. 6 attack on the U.S. Capitol, on Thursday, Dec. 22, 2022, President Donald Trump talks on the phone to Vice President Mike Pence from the Oval Office of the White House on the morning of Jan. 6, 2021.

the 1887 law which has long been criticized as poorly and confusingly written won bipartisan support and would make it harder for future presidential losers to prevent the ascension of their foes, as Trump tried to do on Jan. 6, 2021.

"It's a monumental accomplishment, particularly in this partisan atmosphere, for such a major rewrite of a law that's so crucial to

our democracy," said Rick Hasen, a law professor at the University of California Los Angeles. "This law goes a long way toward shutting down the avenues Trump and his allies tried to use in 2020, and could have been exploited in future elections."

On Jan. 6, Trump targeted Congress' ratification of the Electoral College's vote. He tried to exploit

the vice president's role in reading out the states' electors to get Mike Pence to block Biden from becoming the next president by omitting some states Biden won from the roll. The new provisions make clear that the vice president's responsibilities in the process are merely ceremonial and that the vice president has no say in determining who actually won the election.

Associated Press

The new legislation also raises the threshold required for members of Congress to object to certifying the electors.

Before, only one member of the House and Senate respectively had to object to force a roll call vote on a state's electors. That helped make objections to new presidents something of a routine partisan tactic. Democrats objected to certifying both of George W. Bush's elections and Trump's in 2016.

Those objections, however, were mainly symbolic and came after Democrats had conceded that the Republican candidates won the presidency. On Jan. 6, 2021, Republicans forced a vote on certifying Biden's wins in Arizona and Pennsylvania even after the violent attack on the Capitol, as Trump continued to insist falsely that he won the election.

That led some members of Congress to worry the process could be too easily manipulated.

Under the new rules, one-fifth of each chamber would be required to force a vote on states' slates of electors. □

Military bases had \$260M in damages from Afghan evacuation

By TARA COPP
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Military bases that housed tens of thousands of Afghan refugees in the U.S. incurred almost \$260 million in damages that in some cases rendered buildings unusable for troops until significant repairs to walls and plumbing are made, the Pentagon's inspector general found.

Over the last two weeks of August 2021, the U.S. Air Force managed the largest humanitarian evacuation in its history, airlifting 120,000 people from Afghanistan in just 17 days.

The bulk of those passengers were Afghans fleeing Taliban rule, and U.S. aircraft delivered tens of thousands of those Afghans initially to bases in Qatar,

the United Arab Emirates, Spain, Italy, Bahrain and Germany.

After processing, many of the refugees were flown to eight military bases in the U.S., where many were

housed for months as they awaited visa processing and resettlement; the last Afghan refugee left military housing in February.

The refugees were housed at Fort Bliss, Texas; Joint

Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, New Jersey; Fort McCoy, Wisconsin; Camp Atterbury, Indiana; Fort Pickett, Fort Lee, and Marine Corps Base Quantico, Virginia; and Holloman Air Force Base, New Mexico.

The sheer volume of people in the temporary housing left those barracks and buildings with significant wear and tear, the inspector general found.

In one case, training for the Indiana National Guard was relocated from Camp Atterbury to Fort Campbell, Kentucky, due to damages caused during "Operation Allies Welcome." The facilities need to be restored "to a condition that enables them to conduct trainings, prepare for future events, and return to normal base operations," the IG found.

For example, of the \$260 million in approved restoration costs, the Defense Department approved about \$16 million for Camp Atterbury "to replace mattresses and furniture and repair floors, doors, windows, plumbing, fire alarm systems, and landscaping." But the inspector general questioned whether all the repair work requested by the eight bases was connected to the refugees' stay.

For example, Fort McCoy, which housed 12,706 refugees, was approved for \$145.6 million to repair buildings and plumbing, an amount that was more than three times the combined restoration needs of Fort Bliss and Fort Pickett, which had housed similar numbers of refugees. □



U.S. Military Police walk past Afghan refugees at the Village at the Ft. McCoy U.S. Army base on Sept. 30, 2021 in Ft. McCoy, Wis.

Associated Press

New law ends COVID-19 vaccine mandate for U.S. troops

By LOLITA C. BALDOR

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. military forces around the world will no longer be required to get the COVID-19 vaccine, after the mandate was lifted under an \$858 billion defense spending bill passed by Congress and signed into law Friday by President Joe Biden.

The department has 30 days to work out the details for rescinding the mandate. The Pentagon said Friday that in the meantime the military services would pause any personnel actions, such as discharging troops who refused the shot, and all troops would still be encouraged to get vaccinated and boosted.

Biden had opposed the Republican-backed provision, agreeing with Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin that lifting the mandate was not in the best interests of the military, according to White House officials. But he ultimately accepted GOP demands in order to win passage of the legislation.

The contentious political issue, which has divided America, forced more than 8,400 troops out of the military for refusing to obey a lawful order when they declined to get the vaccine. Thousands of others have sought religious and medi-



Staff Sgt. Travis Snyder, left, receives the first dose of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine given at Madigan Army Medical Center at Joint Base Lewis-McChord in Washington state, Dec. 16, 2020, south of Seattle.

cal exemptions.

The new law effectively ends those exemption requests, but questions remain about whether any limited restrictions may continue for troops on specific missions or assigned to areas of the world where vaccination is still required. Austin, who instituted the mandate last August after the Pfizer vaccine was approved by the Food and Drug Administration and as the coronavirus pandemic raged, was staunch in his desire to maintain it insisting the vaccine was necessary

to protect the health of the force. And he and other defense leaders argued that for decades troops, particularly those deployed overseas, have been required to get as many as 17 different vaccines. No other vaccine mandates were affected by the new law. But Congress agreed to rescind the mandate, with opponents reluctantly saying that perhaps it had already succeeded in getting the bulk of the force vaccinated. Roughly 99% of active-duty troops in the Navy, Air Force and Marine

Corps had gotten the vaccine, and 98% of the Army. The Guard and Reserve rates are lower, but generally are more than 90%.

After signing the defense bill on Friday, Biden said in a statement that certain provisions "raise concerns," but overall it "provides vital benefits and enhances access to justice for military personnel and their families, and includes critical authorities to support our country's national defense, foreign affairs, and homeland security."

The bill includes about \$45

billion more for defense programs than Biden had requested and roughly 10% more than last year's bill as lawmakers looked to account for inflation and boost the nation's military competitiveness with China and Russia. It includes a 4.6% pay raise for service members and the Defense Department's civilian workforce. According to U.S. officials, the department will take at least some of the next 30 days to work out the details of rescinding the vaccine mandate and decide what specific orders will come from Austin and what, if any, flexibility he will leave to service secretaries and chiefs.

Defense officials familiar with the ongoing discussions said there have been high-level meetings on the issue with some spirited discussions, and that service leaders have made it clear that they want clear, specific guidance and for everyone to implement the new directive the same way. □

The officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss internal deliberations, said the department is reviewing legal and medical advice as they figure out how to mitigate any potential health risks in military missions. □

U.S. maritime liability rules changed after 2019 boat fire

By STEFANIE DAZIO

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Federal lawmakers have changed 19th-century maritime liability rules for accident victims and their families in response to the 2019 boat fire off the coast of Southern California that killed 34 people.

The Small Passenger Vessel Liability Fairness Act was included in the \$858 billion defense spending bill that President Joe Biden signed Friday.

It updates the Limitation of Liability Act of 1851, under which boat owners were able to limit their liability to the value of the remains of the vessel. In the case of

the Conception, the scuba diving boat where an inferno trapped 33 passengers and one crew member in the bunkroom below deck off Santa Barbara three years ago, the boat was a total loss.

Now owners of small passenger vessels can be held legally responsible for damages in accidents and incidents, regardless of the boat's value afterward.

The final version of the law, sponsored last year by California Democrats Rep. Salud Carbajal and Sen. Dianne Feinstein, is not retroactive and will not apply in the case of the Conception, one of the deadliest maritime tragedies in re-

cent U.S. history.

"This is an important change, inspired by the families of the 34 precious lives lost on the Conception in 2019, that will ensure families of future maritime disasters do not face the same antiquated laws when seeking the support they deserve," Carbajal, who represents the area where the disaster occurred, said in a news release.

The 1851 law is a time-tested legal maneuver that has been successfully employed by owners of vessels from the Titanic to countless others, some as small as Jet Skis. It has its origins in 18th-century England and was meant to promote the

shipping business.

A suit filed by the Conception's owners to limit their liability remains ongoing in federal court.

The Passenger Vessel Association, a trade group, did not immediately respond to a request for comment. □



This undated file photo provided by the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) shows the wreckage of the dive boat Conception on a dock in Southern California.

Associated Press

Greece: EU's external border is hardening, attitudes are too

By DEREK GATOPOULOS

Associated Press

LYKOFI, Greece (AP) — Accompanied by a cloud of mosquitos, Police Capt. Konstantinos Tsolakidis and three other border guards set out on a boat patrol along the Evros River that forms a natural frontier between Greece and Turkey. The route takes them through a maze formed by tall reeds, past clusters of flamingos and boat trippers visiting a nature reserve where the river fans out to meet the Mediterranean. The Evros called the Meric River in Turkey runs through one of the remotest parts of Europe. It's also becoming one of its most militarized as Greece and the wider European Union work on ways to prevent migrants from entering the country from Turkey.

In 2023, Greece plans to triple the length of a steel border wall. The five-meter (16-foot) high structure, made with sturdy steel columns, has foundation supports up to 10 meters deep and is topped with razor wire and an anti-grip metal scaling barrier.

In army-controlled areas on the Greek side of the border, the EU is funding and testing an advanced surveillance network that uses machine-learning software and an array of fixed and mobile cameras and sensors to detect migrants trying to cross the border.

Critics of the measures argue that Greece is toughening authoritarian policies against migrants and asylum-seekers, operating in the shadows in border areas that are under military control and where outside civilian monitors are denied access. A visit by Associated Press journalists to the Greek-Turkish border area took place under military and police supervision.

Police and border residents say they are just happy that the wall is working.

"It's impossible to penetrate," says Tsolakidis, who supervises patrols along a southern section of the border. "It's been built in areas along the Evros where crossings were most fre-



A boy fishes as police border guards on a boat patrol along the Evros River that forms a natural border between Greece and Turkey, on Sunday, Oct. 30, 2022.

quent. And the deterrence capacity is 100%."

In a post-pandemic surge of activity, more than 250,000 migrant crossings have been prevented this year at the land border between Greece and Turkey through late November, according to Greek authorities. During the same period, more than 5,000 people were detained after making it across the river.

Border guards, who use sniffer dogs, loudspeakers and powerful spotlights on patrols, say multiple incidents involving up to 1,000 migrants aren't uncommon in a single day during the summer and early fall when water levels along the Evros hit an annual low.

Small islets, some straddling the midpoint of the river where the border technically lies, seasonally reappear, making crossings easier.

Completed in 2021, the wall currently spans 27 kilometers (17 miles) in three separate sections but is considered to be effective over an additional 10 kilometers (six miles) because of ground conditions. Authorities plan to add up to another 100 kilometers (60 miles) of the steel barrier to cover most of the 192-kilometer (120-mile) land border.

When wall building started

at the border a decade ago, it was met with heated political debate and public demonstrations backed by left-wing parties and Greek human rights groups.

Reaction this time around has been muted. With little discussion, parliament recently passed an emergency amendment sanctioning the extension, with rules for commercial tenders and cost control safeguards both waived through June 30, 2023.

A poll published by private Antenna television found that nearly two thirds of Greek voters support tougher measures to control migration, with just 8.1% arguing that policing needs to be relaxed. Backing for the tougher measures was reported across party lines, and includes more than 60% of voters from the left-wing main opposition party which officially opposes the wall extension.

The October survey was conducted by the Marc polling company for the private Greek channel.

At one newly built section of the wall, buds of cotton from nearby farms are caught in the razor wire, while wild goats, cut off from their usual grazing grounds, scour the riverbank for something to eat. A few hundred meters westward, 41-year-old farm worker Stavros Lazaridis

tosses bales of hay onto a truck. He says the extension can't come fast enough.

"Before the wall went up, we had a lot of trouble. More than 200 or 300 (migrants) could cross through the village in a single day. It was out of control," he said.

The local police station has retrieved pickup trucks stolen by smugglers in border villages and abandoned near a bus station in the northern Greek port city of Thessaloniki. Piles of clothes, dumped by migrants traveling with just a small backpack, are often found near highways in the area.

Border village residents, Lazaridis says, used to be sympathetic to migrants, many of whom are fleeing wars in the Middle East to seek asylum in Europe, but they have grown tired of the nightly disruptions.

"There are old people who live in these villages, many living by themselves, and they are scared to leave their homes," he said. "It's quiet here now, but further north where there's no (wall), things are still crazy." Polling data suggests residents of other EU frontier states, including Poland and the Baltic nations, have also become more security conscious as threats like Russia's war in Ukraine draw closer to the bloc's external borders.

And a flareup in a spat between Greece and Turkey over maritime boundaries and drilling rights has darkened disputes over migration.

Greece has made a series of international complaints after border police in October found 92 male migrants, stripped of their clothing, and accused Turkish authorities of deliberately pushing them over the border.

Turkey has repeatedly accused Greece of carrying out clandestine deportations, known as pushbacks, of potential asylum-seekers, and putting their lives at risk.

Athens is also under fire from major human rights groups, United Nations and EU refugee agencies, and even a government advisory panel that says hundreds of credible accounts have been gathered suggesting that often-violent pushbacks have been occurring at the Greek-Turkish border for up to 20 years. The U.N. and EU agencies are demanding the creation of an independent border monitoring body, a request that Athens has so far failed to act upon.

Disputes with countries bordering the EU, and the often legitimate security concerns they generate, have reduced attention on migrants in need of international protection and are tempting European governments to adopt hard-line policies, argues Begum Basdas at the Center for Fundamental Rights at the Hertie School in Berlin. "The militarization of migration is disabling us from seeing the issue as a human rights concern ... and what is really worrying me is the creeping in of authoritarianism through migration management in the European Union," Basdas said.

"People are not really critical of the securitization or wall building at the borders because they don't really see the connection between migration and the decay of democratic values in their own environment, in their own rights," she said. □

U.N. urges rescue of refugees adrift in Andaman Sea

By GRANT PECK

Associated Press

BANGKOK (AP) — The United Nations and other groups urged countries in southern Asia on Friday to rescue as many as 190 people believed to be Rohingya refugees aboard a small boat that has been adrift for several weeks in the Andaman Sea.

Most of those on board are thought to be Rohingya Muslims from Myanmar who had lived in crowded refugee camps in Bangladesh for as many as five years and are seeking a better life in Malaysia and Indonesia. Messages they reportedly sent by satellite phone to their families describe their situation as desperate.

"Reports indicate those on-board have now remained at sea for a month in dire conditions with insufficient food or water, without any efforts by States in the region to help save human lives," the U.N. refugee agency, UNHCR, said in a statement. "Many are women and children, with reports of up to 20 people dying on the unseaworthy vessel during the journey." "All States have a responsibility to rescue those on the boat and allow them to



A Rohingya refugee holds a placard during a gathering to mark the fifth anniversary of their exodus from Myanmar to Bangladesh, at a Kutupalong Rohingya refugee camp at Ukhiya in Cox's Bazar district, Bangladesh, Thursday, Aug. 25, 2022.

safely disembark in line with legal obligations and in the name of humanity," it said. Malaysia and Indonesia both have Muslim majorities, even though groups seeking refuge risk detention on arrival. The UNHCR said unverified reports indicated the boat is currently north of Aceh in Indonesia. The journeys are often made this time of year, when seas are usually calmer but remain treach-

erous, especially because the vessels used by human traffickers are often dilapidated. Earlier this month, an oil exploration support vessel rescued more than 150 Rohingya after their boat started taking on water and handed them over to Myanmar authorities. On Dec. 18, the Sri Lanka navy rescued 105 Rohingya refugees whose boat was adrift and sighted by fishermen. More than 700,000 Ro-

hingya have fled from Buddhist-majority Myanmar to refugee camps in Bangladesh since August 2017, when the Myanmar military launched brutal counter-insurgency operations in response to attacks by a rebel group. Myanmar's security forces have been accused of mass rapes, killings and the burning of thousands of Rohingya homes. On Thursday, the U.N. special rapporteur on the situ-

ation of human rights in Myanmar, Tom Andrews, urged governments in South and Southeast Asia "to immediately and urgently coordinate search and rescue for this boat and ensure safe disembarkation of those aboard before any further loss of life occurs."

"While many in the world are preparing to enjoy a holiday season and ring in a new year, boats bearing desperate Rohingya men, women and young children, are setting off on perilous journeys in unseaworthy vessels," Andrews said in a statement.

UNHCR said information on Rohingya boat people is difficult to verify, but if the latest reports are true, they bring "the number of dead and missing in the Bay of Bengal and the Andaman Sea to nearly 200 this year," or about 10% of the estimated 2,000 people who have taken risky sea journeys in the region during the year. Chris Lewa, director of the Arakan Project, a private organization that monitors the Rohingya crisis, said Thursday her group has collected information received by satellite phone by families of those aboard the boat. □

Associated Press

Eastern Congo's M23 rebels retreat from occupied territory

By JUSTIN KATUMWA and AL-HADJI KUDRA MALIRO

Associated Press

KIBUMBA, Congo (AP) —

Eastern Congo's M23 rebels retreated Friday from some of the territory it held, the group's first withdraw-

al since it began seizing swaths of land more than a year ago. The rebels left the Kibumba area and its positions were taken over by the East African Regional Force a multinational force charged with protecting the area. This retreat is in line with an agreement made last month at a summit in Angola, Lawrence Kanyuka the M23's political spokesman said in a statement. Kibumba, in the Nyriragongo territory of Congo's North Kivu province, has been held by the M23 since November and it was the closest that the rebels got to Goma, eastern Congo's regional capital. Speaking to reporters Fri-

day from Kibumba, Gen. Jeff Nyagah, commander of the East African force, called on the civilian population to return home promising that they would be safe. "We are determined to conduct operations in strict compliance with international humanitarian law and other conventions," he said. "We appreciate the complex nature of the operating environment but our zeal and determination remain undeterred." The M23 rebels are largely Congolese ethnic Tutsis who became prominent 10 years ago when their fighters seized Goma, eastern Congo's largest city on the border with Rwanda. The

group derives its name from a March 23, 2009, peace deal, which it accuses the Congo government of not implementing. The group has been largely dormant for nearly a decade. Since resurfacing more than a year ago, the M23 have been accused of killing civilians and seizing land in eastern Congo's Rutshuru territory. Earlier this month the United Nations accused the rebels of being responsible for massacring more than 130 civilians in two villages. The group is believed to be receiving weapons and troops from neighboring Rwanda, according to a report by U.N. experts. □



M23 rebels prepare to leave after a ceremony to mark the withdrawal from their positions in the town of Kibumba, in the eastern of Democratic Republic of Congo, Friday, Dec. 23, 2022. Associated Press

Starting January 1st, 2023

Aruba Airport Authority N.V. to operate General Aviation Terminal at Aeropuerto Internacional Reina Beatrix

ORANJESTAD – The General Aviation Terminal, better known as the FBO at Aeropuerto Internacional Reina Beatrix, will be managed and operated by Aruba Airport Authority N.V. (AAA) starting January 1, 2023.

Starting the New Year 2023 the FBO operation will be operated and managed by AAA under its new name – JET-TNCA. Jet being the obvious choice of words to best reflect the fact that private aircraft or jets will be handled at the FBO terminal at the airport and TNCA being the ICAO code for the airport in Aruba.

JET-TNCA is uniquely positioned in the Caribbean region making it the perfect stop between North and Latin America. Besides its geographical and strategic advantages, JET-TNCA offers a wide variety of services to its customers. Customers can make use of JET-TNCA's traveler lounge and refreshment area, all while experiencing the highest level of customer service.

Additionally, JET-TNCA's su-



pervisory and coordination services provide customers with a single point of essential flight services such as aircraft fueling, catering, ground support, accommodations and transportation arrangements, and more importantly US Customs & Border Protection Pre-Clearance services.

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The new JET-TNCA operations team is excited to

welcome all its clients and is personally committed to plan and deliver successful mission by offering a complete range of first-class services supported by dedicated professional who are constantly looking at new and innovative ways to satisfy the ever-changing needs and desires of its guests.

The JET-TNCA day-to-day operations will be managed by a team of professionals and led by its FBO Manager Mrs. Minerva Flemming. The business development activities of the JET-TNCA will be performed from within the AAA team responsible for aviation business development which is led by Mrs.



Jo-Anne Meaux-Arends, Executive Aviation Business Development at AAA. For more information on JET-TNCA, please visit our website: www.jet-tnca.com or contact us via email on ops@jet-tnca.com or call 297-5882465

About AUA Airport

AUA Airport is one of the busiest airports in the Caribbean region, with 24 different airlines operating into Aruba contributing to processing over 2.5 million passengers per year (pre-covid) and providing air service to 26 destinations worldwide. AUA Airport is operationally solid where over 95% of all visitors are leisure guests: 77% from the United States & Canada,

11% from Latin America, 7% from Europe, and 5% from Dutch Caribbean, year to date, November 2022. AUA Airport attributes this to the island's stable economic and political climate, hospitable and multilingual population, and safe environment. AUA Airport undergoes continuous upgrades to maintain its position as one of the region's most innovative airports.

Learn more about what's happening at AUA Airport by visiting www.airport-aruba.com and connect with AUA Airport on Twitter, twitter.com/Aruba_Airport, Facebook, facebook.com/ArubaAirport, Instagram, instagram.com/arubaairport/ and LinkedIn, linkedin.com/ArubaAirport/

Different cruise ships visiting Aruba during Christmas and New Year weekend

ORANJESTAD – Year-end holidays are a time when a lot of people choose to go on vacation, and this way enjoy with their loved ones. In Aruba this is also one of the seasons during which we receive the most visitors.

Aruba Tourism Authority (ATA) and Aruba Ports Authority (APA) informed that regarding the weekend of Christmas, we will be receiving a total of seven cruise ships: Norwegian Pearl and Aidaperla on the 24th; Norwegian Epic and Seven Seas Navigator; Norwegian Encore, Seabourn Sojourn and Royal Caribbean Voyager of the Seas on the 26th.

As for the weekend of New Year, we will be receiving a total of five cruise ships: Regal Princess, Zaan-

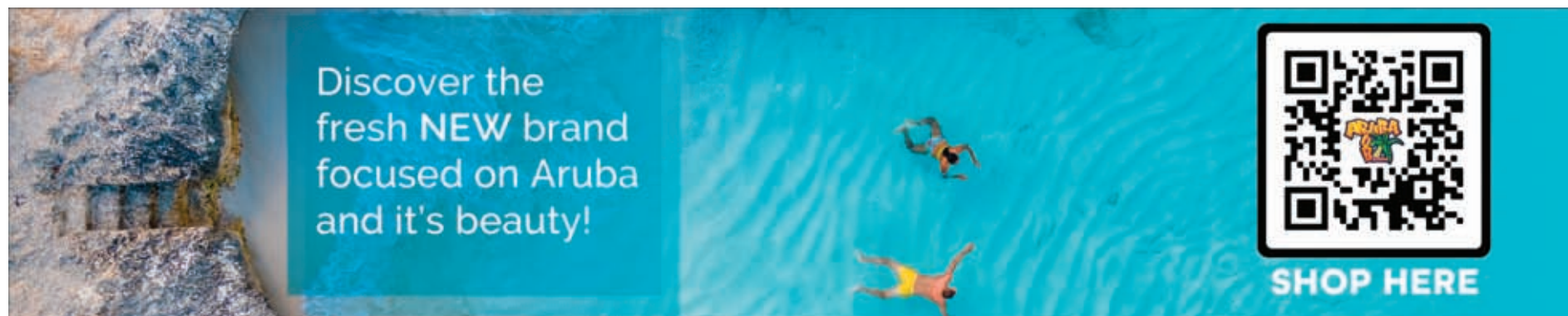


dam and Costa Pacifica on the 31st of December; Norwegian Epic and Royal Caribbean Vision of the Seas on the first of January.

Tourists arriving to Aruba on a cruise ship we will be around different areas during their visit, and this will result in areas being busier than normal during the holidays.

The arrival of visitors during this season gives us an opportunity to share our culture and traditions for the year-end holidays with them and let them feel at home in Aruba.

According to APA and ATA, cruise tourism is also on the road to recovery compared to 2019, both in the amount of visitors as well as the amount of cruise ships arriving to our island. Important to mention that next week there will be three cruise ships coming to Aruba for the first time, thus three First Calls, something that always comes with a sense of pride for the island. □



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ba-themed apparel and beach gear. ☐

Don't forget to visit Aruba's famous Red Anchor

At the south east coast of the island, standing alone on a windswept and barren land stands a popular Aruba landmark – a large anchor. It overlooks the sea just beyond, watching over the shipping lanes. It stands there in memory and in honor of all seamen who have lost their life at sea.

Where to Find the Anchor?

The anchor is a "must see" landmark when you visit Aruba. It is among the most photographed historical landmarks for the island. You want to make sure you add this stop on your itinerary when your visiting the south coast of Aruba. The bright red anchor against the backdrop of the deep blue Caribbean sea and the azure blue skies, make a great backdrop for your

vacation pictures.

The anchor is located at the entrance to Gate 6 to the former Lago Colony. It is on the outskirts of Seroe Colorado, on the south east point of the island at the "T" junction to Baby Beach. Depending on where you are staying on the island, follow the signs that indicate the way to Baby Beach. Once you reach the T-junction, it will be right in front of you.

About the Anchor

Size

It will be hard to miss the anchor, it's huge! The anchor that weighs 21,772 kilos, is approximately 10 feet 6 inches wide and 15 feet, 6 inches tall.

On the anchor there are some numbers. The 4112 and 4115, which are believed to be the serial numbers that refer to the "fluke"

or horizontal and vertical parts of the anchor, respectively. The number 21772K refers to the weight of the anchor in kilos.

This type of anchor was manufactured by Hoesch Dortmund Horde, at a foundry located in Germany.

Where did the Anchor Come From?

There are a number of stories as to the origins of the anchor, which one do you think it was? (Unfortunately the mystery has never been solved, so your imagination can pick which one you think it might be!)

How Did The Anchor Become a Landmark?

Sometime between 1980 and 1985, three gentlemen (Mr. Wim Martinus – the Harbormaster of Aruba;

Mr. August Genser – the ex-Division Superintendent of Lago's Laboratory; and Mr. Willie Davis – Owner of Filtec at Zeewijk in San Nicolas), were having a conversation with Mr. Charlie Brouns Jr. at his famous Charlie's Bar and Restaurant in San Nicolas. Charlie, who was a visionary and had dreams for developing the San Nicolas area, told these gentlemen that he would like to come up with something innovative for the San Nicolas area to draw tourism to the area. The "anchor", which at that time was being stored at the Oranjestad harbor, was suggested as an option. Charlie liked the idea! He then contacted the President of Lago for permission to acquire the anchor. He was granted permission and the anchor was then

relocated to its present location and dedicated "To All Seamen" on the occasion of the closing of the Lago Oil Refinery on March 31, 1985.

The Best Time to Visit

When your planning your visit to the south end of the island, you will want to include in your itinerary the many things to see and do there. The anchor will be just one of these stops, (keep an eye out for our future editions, we publish our recommendations!).

With that being said, I have to say, if you enjoy catching a sunrise, the anchor is one of the best places on the island to catch the sunrise. But in reality, anytime is a good time to visit, depending on your personal schedule. ☐

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How it all began

It was 1938 when Mr. Eric Ponson started his journey at General Store. Ponson did not hesitate and decided to buy General Store. Buying a store and thus going from employee to owner of a business with a debt of 11.000 guilders was not an easy task.

As the saying goes: "Behind every successful man, is a strong woman". In the case of Ponson, this was no different. As General

Store progressed and slowly became successful, Mrs. Irene Ponson, came in to assist her husband. Irene Ponson is a visionary, she knew exactly where and how to invest and within a short amount of time in 1970, General Store moved to a better location at the Steenweg. This allowed for a lot more merchandise, products and employees. Supply and demand was as such, that General Store became the number 1 electrical business. Business kept going so well that the location at the Steenweg became too small and was moved later to Dakota Shopping Paradise and later to Pedro Gallego Straat. With this move, an expansion was decided upon and an electronics store in Savaneta was opened. General Store still being very successful was ready for more growth.

Ricky, Kenneth, Corine and Frans are the fruits of this marriage. Kenneth and Frans however, decided to further develop their father's legacy and continued with their mother's dream to expand the business. An expansion not in square feet only, but in merchandise as well. A great opportunity presented itself when the Ponson family was able to buy a piece of property across from the airport. In 2007 the Ponson family moved into their brand new and huge building

After a successful opening and expansion, Kenneth and Frans who inherited their mother's vision, decided that General Store was ready for yet another expansion. With the support of Mr. Tom Barfell and management of Do it Best in the States, the construction of Do it Center commenced.

Fast forward to today. A Do it Center in Aruba, with more than 50.000 top of the line items for interior as well exterior use, building materials, STO products and a top of the line grocery store. Perseverance, responsibility, vision and the courage to invest have made Ponson's General Store as successful as it is today.

Super Do It Center Shaba & Groceries

Located in Shaba, Noord. This is the last sibling of the Do It Center family. Here you will be able to find anything you are looking for. The building is divided into several departments from home to hardware to groceries. Everything under one roof.

Groceries? Visit the fully stocked supermarket with fresh fruits and vegetables and high class meat selections. Highly known products and brands are here for you to grab. Every week Do It Center

Groceries offers its weekly special on selected items. Weekly specials are very popular and a perfect chance for you to buy your favorite products at a reduced price.

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Do it Center Shaba is open from Monday to Saturday from 8AM to 8PM and on Sunday's from 9AM to 6PM.

For more information go to www.doit.aw.



Another Treasure of Aruba's Beaches: Sea Glass!

NOORD - It is hard to imagine this happening today, but years ago people dumped all kinds of refuse straight into the ocean, including old cars, and their household garbage, which of course included lots of glass. Over the next 30 years the pounding waves cleaned the beach, by breaking down everything but glass and pottery. The pounding waves washed the trash up and down, back and forth. Tons of polished, broken glass pieces were created by the pounding surf. These smoothened, colored glass particles then settled along the sea shore in millions, and that is why you can



find these beautiful and colorful pieces on the north shore beaches of Aruba.

Especially on the strip on white sand between the famous Natural Bridge" and the huge red anchor close



to "Grapefield" beach you will be able to find your own pieces of sea glass. The sea glass that was created is the product of a very long and interesting process. It can take anywhere from 10 to 30 years to make sea glass. The name for any piece of glass that finds its way to the ocean and tumbles around in the water long enough is "Sea glass."

The colorful pieces of glass are being used for decoration, handcrafts and jewelry!

Once glass makes its way into the ocean, the glass is broken up into shards and is tumbled around in the water, where sand and other rocks act like sandpaper to smooth out its rough edges. Sometimes as the sea glass is passed through fire, it becomes fire glass, the rarest of sea glass with certain inclusions, just like precious gems.

For years, the water beat against the different kinds of trash being dumped. Glass, household appliances and even motor parts were discarded on the beach. The waves and weather conditions wore down the overwhelming amount of garbage in the water, creating millions of beautiful smooth rocks.

It's hard to believe the short-sighted mistakes we were making that could have potentially ruined these beautiful beaches. But thanks to natural processes, the ocean transformed the trash into the

sea glass.

Each colored gem on the beach has its own story.

The ruby red glass stones are typically from old car tail-lights.

Then, the sapphire rocks are the remnants of broken apothecary bottles. The most common and the easiest to find are the brown (Amstel & Polar beer), green (Heineken & Balashi beer) and clear glass which are the soft much loved "soft drink" bottles.

If you like to see the sea glass for yourself, and be in awe of the power of nature, rent a car or jeep and go explore our deserted beaches on the north side of the island. Make it a fun family day!

Even if we didn't mean to pollute the Beaches how we did, it is inspiring to see just how the earth can correct our mistakes.

Funny, how trash can change into treasures!

Everybody knows that you are not allowed to take local shells home, but the people working at the airport have no problem you taking sea glass home. A few of those pieces make great souvenirs. You can place them in a wine glass or large bottle for decoration and every time you look at it a smile will light up your face thinking back of your unforgettable Aruba vacation! ☐



Camacuri Harley Davidson Club Aruba preparing for events on the 18th of March

ORANJESTAD - Last Thursday, during a press conference, president of Camacuri Harley Davidson Club Aruba, Buchi Croes announced the group's activities related to their biggest bike ride celebrating our Flag and Anthem Day next year

Mr. Croes explained that normally they hold their press conference for this on the 8th of March, but this time they are bringing it forward because at the beginning of the year there are a lot of activities like Carnival, and when the 8th of March comes around, people are not aware and are busy with other things. They need to put this together properly and inform the community about the bikers' event after they've been through Carnival.

This year, Camacuri Harley Davidson Club Aruba is marking their 25th anniversary, but as Croes commented, this went quietly because the island was still under the effects of the Covid pandemic. He explained that he had a meeting with minister of Justice and Social Affairs,

Mr. Rocco Tjon in order to obtain a permit for a celebration, and the minister said that while they could receive a permit, they should not advertise until the amount of cases went down.

"When we got the green light it was honestly a week before the event, and this is why I say it went by quietly. But this year it will be 26 years, I will say 5 lustrum+, and we said that we will begin with a press conference before the change of the year to inform the entire island so they can prepare for next year; to every biker, the clubs who always participate, both from Aruba and abroad."

Croes commented that the activities for the 18th of March – Flag and Anthem Day – normally begin on the 8th of March with the press conference announcing the official schedule. The schedule mentioned today is tentative in order to give insight on what will be taking place.

It will begin on the 15th of March with unloading of the containers that bring bikes from Curacao, Bonaire and Suriname, which



will come to Aruba to participate. Suriname bikers have already come in the past but without their bikes, they rented or borrowed bikes here on the island. But this time they are bringing a container with their own bikes. There will also be a group from Colombia present.

On Thursday 16th of March will be the official registration for the event on the 18th of March. Registration will take place at Hooters. Friday 17th of March there will be a night ride, during which the club will visit some sites around Aruba, finishing in One Bar.

"Thanks to One Bar to receive us at home. We are very glad that they are re-

ceiving us", Croes pointed out.

On Saturday 18th of March there will be the Crioyo Night at Camacuri Village. There will be a bike ride around Aruba, and it will end in Camacuri Village with tents that will be selling different Aruban things like souvenirs and local food.

Croes explained that during the day, if everything goes according to plan, there will be an event in Palo Marga. He said that for this weekend a lot of bikers are coming from Curacao and Bonaire, and the Aruban bikers will also be present doing fever on the street – although in the past authorities called their

attention for this.

Croes commented that if they go to Palo Marga – a racing track – they can organize an event and have racing, drifting, etc. and avoid the dangers of having these activities on the street, not only for themselves but for the public on the road as well.

Sunday the 19th of March is the day in which officially Camacuri Harley Davidson Club goes on the streets for a ride. They always begin with a breakfast and then go on the ride and play different games, which for many years include different stops. Right now they still have not confirmed where this ride will end.

Croes commented that many times they approach the government of Aruba, and this time they received help from the minister. "This year they helped us, and next year the minister said they will be better prepared. We hope it will be something positive."

"We need the help because it costs a lot. It truly costs a lot of money and a lot of work. It is not only me doing this, but I have a team, a directive and we also have our members. I always say that if you don't have members, you don't have a club. The members give you the motivation to continue fighting to reach where you want to go", Croes said. □



CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

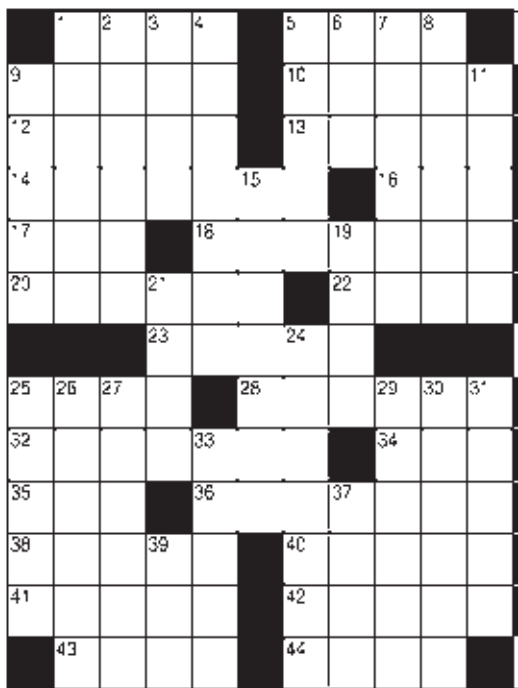
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22 Verdant
23 Custom
25 Singer Redding
28 Arboreal sleepers
32 Bach creation
34 Cool, to jazzmen
35 Secreted
36 Cheese-filled dessert
38 "The Waste Land" poet
40 One of Santa's reindeer
41 Rascal

DOWN

- 1 Untamed
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6 Nonsense
7 Agency
8 Boal backs
9 Gem side
11 Letter flourish
15 Two-deck game
19 Singer Laine
21 Do some house-work
24 Quick looks
25 Earthy color
26 Suit expert
27 Rainbow color
29 Poet Dylan
30 Mount St. —
31 Barbecue rods
33 Took steps
37 Tele-scope sight
39 Anjou answer



Yesterday's answer



12-24

AXYDLBAAXR is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

12-24

CRYPTOQUOTE

ADM H QVSFE QHL VRTNSHL.
VFV QV EFCZV CDM CU
YHPQM — "QSIIG TQFHYMLSY
MC SNN. SXE MC SNN S
PCCE XHPQM!" — TNVLVXM
TNSFJV LCCFV

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: THERE IS NO WINTER WITHOUT SNOW, NO SPRING WITHOUT SUNSHINE, AND NO HAPPINESS WITHOUT COMPANIONS. — KOREAN PROVERB

How to make holiday returns with buy now, pay later

By JACKIE VELING
of NerdWallet

Shoppers who used "buy now, pay later" to help finance gifts this holiday season may soon encounter an unwelcome surprise: Returns can be more challenging than when buying from the store with cash or a credit card.

Returns and disputes are a common concern among buy now, pay later users, according to a September 2022 report from the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, and dispute resolution is the top buy now, pay later-related complaint in the CFPB's Consumer Complaint Database.

But making a seamless return with buy now, pay later isn't impossible if you know the process ahead of time. Whether it's a gift you bought or received, you'll want to deal with the retailer when making the return and follow up with the buy now, pay later provider, if necessary.

WHAT TO KNOW ABOUT BUY NOW, PAY LATER RETURNS

When you use a buy now, pay later provider like Afterpay, Affirm or Klarna, you're opting to divide your total purchase into smaller, often interest-free installments while the provider pays in full on your behalf. That means when you make a return, the refund goes to the buy now, pay later provider. It's up to the provider to apply the refund to your account, and there's usually a lag.

Because buy now, pay later loans have quick turnarounds payments are due every two weeks on standard pay-in-four loans you can get stuck making payments on a gift that has been returned.



A shopper carries bags down Fifth Avenue on Friday, Nov. 25, 2022, in New York.

Associated Press

The industry also remains largely unregulated. If a package goes missing or arrives damaged, consumers have fewer protections compared with other financing products.

"Returns can be a challenge with buy now, pay later because there are specific dispute provisions that apply to credit cards that may not exist in the BNPL space depending on the lender," says Laura Udis, senior program manager of small dollar, marketplace and installment lending at the CFPB.

Udis points out that some providers voluntarily offer protections. PayPal and Klarna, for example, have formal protection policies, which may increase the likelihood of a refund.

According to Klarna, its buyer protection policy was implemented to reassure shoppers they can safely shop with the app.

"If goods are not delivered or if there is something wrong with them, we have a clear process to help shoppers resolve any issue and ensure that no customer is unjustifiably liable

to pay for a purchase," Kristina Elkhazin, head of Klarna North America, said in an email.

However, returns are ultimately subject to the store's policy, and shoppers should prioritize getting returns approved with the store before contacting the buy now, pay later provider.

STEPS TO MAKING A BUY NOW, PAY LATER RETURN

If you need to return a holiday gift that was purchased with buy now, pay later, follow these steps.

CHECK THE BUY NOW, PAY LATER PROVIDER'S RETURN PROCESS:

Most providers maintain a webpage that explains the process, which can vary by provider. Learn what to expect with a refund and timeline.

RETURN THE GIFT TO THE STORE:

Providers will direct you to the retailer first, so check the store's return policy. If possible, return online orders in person so you don't risk the item getting lost in the mail. Bring relevant documents like a receipt or email confirmation. If you don't have a receipt, you may be able to make an exchange or receive store credit, depending on the store's policy.

KEEP RECORDS: Retain copies of all transactions, including returns, exchanges or issued store credit. If you mailed a return, get a tracking number. Keep a log of communications with the store.

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Glass act: Scientists reveal secrets of frog transparency

By CHRISTINA LARSON

AP Science Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Now you see them, now you don't.

Some frogs found in South and Central America have the rare ability to turn on and off their nearly transparent appearance, researchers report Thursday in the journal Science.

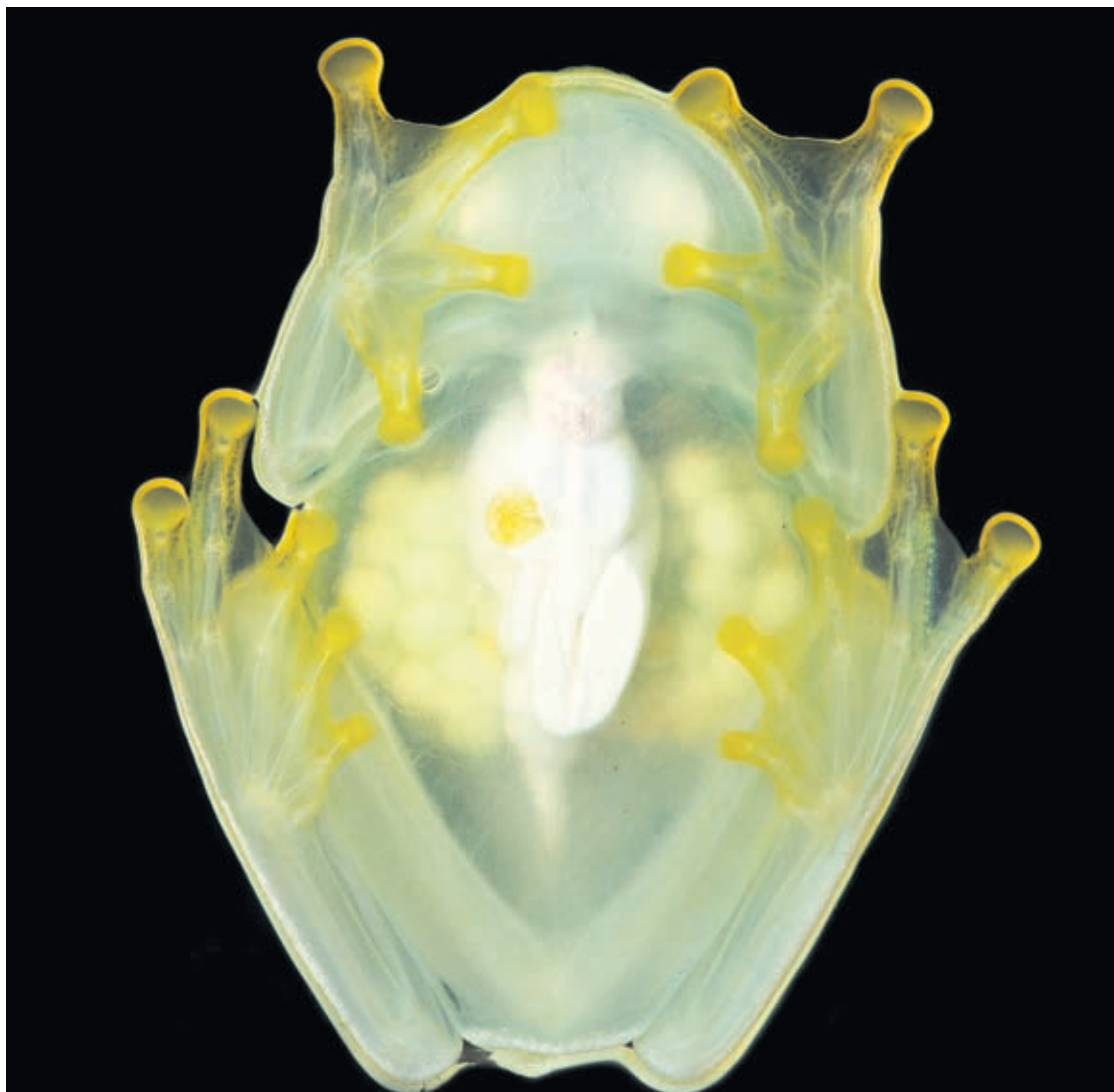
During the day, these nocturnal frogs sleep by hanging underneath tree leaves. Their delicate, greenish transparent forms don't cast shadows, rendering them almost invisible to birds and other predators passing overhead or underneath.

But when northern glass frogs wake up and hop around in search of insects and mates, they take on an opaque reddish-brown color.

"When they're transparent, it's for their safety," said Junjie Yao, a Duke University biomedical engineer and study co-author. When they're awake, they can actively evade predators, but when they're sleeping and most vulnerable, "they have adapted to remain hidden."

Using light and ultrasound imaging technology, the researchers discovered the secret: While asleep, the frogs concentrate, or "hide," nearly 90% of their red blood cells in their liver. Because they have transparent skin and other tissues, it's the blood circulating through their bodies that would otherwise give them away. The frogs also shrink and pack together most of their internal organs, Yao said.

The research "beautifully explains" how "glass frogs conceal blood in the liver to maintain transparency," said Juan Manuel Guayasamin, a frog biologist at University San Francisco of Quito, Ecuador, who was not involved in the study. Exactly how they do this, and why it doesn't kill them, remains a mystery. For most animals, having very little blood circulating oxygen for several hours would be deadly. And



This photo provided by researchers in December 2022 shows a female glass frog with eggs in her transparent ovaries, photographed from below using a flash.

Associated Press

concentrating blood so tightly would result in fatal clotting. But somehow, the frogs survive.

Further research on the species could provide useful clues for the development of anti-blood clotting medications, said Carlos Taboada, a Duke University biologist and study co-author.

Only a few animals, mostly ocean dwellers, are naturally transparent, said Oxford University biologist Richard White, who was not involved in the study.

"Transparency is super rare in nature, and in land animals, it's essentially unheard of outside of the glass frog," White said.

animals, it's essentially unheard of outside of the glass frog," White said.



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Trevor Bauer reinstated by MLB's independent arbitrator

By **RONALD BLUM**
AP Baseball Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Trevor Bauer was reinstated Thursday by Major League Baseball's independent arbitrator, allowing the pitcher to resume his career at the start of the 2023 season.

The 31-year-old Los Angeles Dodgers star was given an unprecedented two-season suspension without pay by baseball Commissioner Rob Manfred on April 29 for violating the league's domestic violence and sexual assault policy after a San Diego woman said Bauer beat and sexually abused her last year, an accusation the pitcher denied.

The players' association filed a grievance on behalf of the former Cy Young Award winner, and a three-person panel headed by independent arbitrator Martin Scheinman started hearing the case on May 23.

Scheinman upheld a 194-game suspension rather than Manfred's intended 324-game penalty but reinstated Bauer immediately, assigning 50 games to cover part of the lengthy time Bauer was put on administrative leave while MLB investigated during the 2021 season and early this year. "Can't wait to see y'all out at a stadium soon!" Bauer wrote on Twitter.

Bauer will lose more than



Los Angeles Dodgers starting pitcher Trevor Bauer pauses while working against the San Francisco Giants during the fourth inning of a baseball game May 21, 2021, in San Francisco.

Associated Press

\$37 million in salary for the final 144 games of last season and for the first 50 games of next season, through May 23. The lost salary next year is effectively a clawback from part of his administrative leave, when he continued to receive pay.

MLB said Scheinman affirmed that Bauer violated the domestic violence policy.

"While we believe a longer suspension was warranted, MLB will abide by the neutral arbitrator's decision, which upholds baseball's

longest-ever active player suspension for sexual assault or domestic violence," MLB said in a statement. "We understand this process was difficult for the witnesses involved and we thank them for their participation."

While Scheinman issued his award to the parties, a full written decision is not expected until later. The panel included MLB Deputy Commissioner Dan Halem and union assistant general counsel Bob Lenaghan.

"While we are pleased that Mr. Bauer has been

reinstated immediately, we disagree that any discipline should have been imposed," Bauer's representatives, Jon Fetterolf, Shawn Holley and Rachel Luba, said in a statement. "That said, Mr. Bauer looks forward to his return to the field, where his goal remains to help his team win a World Series."

The players' association declined comment on Scheinman's decision. Bauer was never charged with a crime. His accuser sought but was denied a restraining order against

him, and Los Angeles prosecutors said in February there was insufficient evidence to prove the woman's accusations beyond a reasonable doubt.

Bauer, who hasn't played since the allegations surfaced and MLB began investigating, repeatedly has said that everything that happened between him and the woman was consensual.

An email sent after business hours Thursday seeking comment from the woman's attorney, Bryan Freedman, wasn't immediately returned.

Bauer sued his accuser in federal court, a move that came less than three months after prosecutors decided not to file criminal charges against the pitcher. Bauer named the woman and one of her attorneys, Niranjana Fred Thiagarajah, as defendants in the lawsuit.

The Associated Press does not typically identify people who say they have been victims of sexual assault.

The lawsuit said that "the damage to Mr. Bauer has been extreme" after the woman alleged that he had choked her into unconsciousness, punched her repeatedly and had anal sex with her without her consent during two sexual encounters last year. □

Aaron Donald unlikely to return this season, McVay says

THOUSAND OAKS, Calif. (AP) — Aaron Donald is unlikely to return to the Los Angeles Rams' defense this season.

Donald will miss his fourth straight game with a high ankle sprain Sunday when the Rams (4-10) host the Denver Broncos.

Coach Sean McVay admitted Friday that his seven-time All-Pro lineman and three-time NFL Defensive Player of the Year isn't expected to play in the final two meaningless games of the Rams' disastrous Super Bowl title defense.

"He's not cleared yet, and I don't know that I see that changing in the next couple of weeks," McVay said. The 31-year-old Donald had never missed a game due to injury in his NFL career before this disappointing end to his ninth season. He has a career-low five sacks in 11 games, but was still named to his ninth Pro Bowl this week.

The Rams lost all but a mathematical hope of playoff contention during their recent six-game losing streak, yet they had been reluctant to rule out Don-

ald for the season despite the obvious seriousness of his injury. Donald apparently had been interested in attempting to return even for meaningless games with the Rams, who have matched the 1999 Denver Broncos for the most losses in NFL history by a defending champ.

"Obviously, he's a guy that has certainly earned the right where you talk to him" before ruling him out, McVay said of Donald.

McVay has made similar statements in previous weeks about Super Bowl



Los Angeles Rams defensive tackle Aaron Donald looks on from the bench during the first half of an NFL football game against the Arizona Cardinals on Nov. 13, 2022, in Inglewood, Calif.

Associated Press

MVP Cooper Kupp, who also incurred a high ankle sprain last month, and quarterback Matthew Stafford, who has bruising on his

spinal cord. Although both are not firmly ruled out for the season, both are highly unlikely to play in the Rams' final three games. □

No slapping, please, at the 2022 Newby Awards

By PAUL NEWBERRY
AP Sports Columnist

As the world reclaimed a bit of normalcy in 2022, the Newby Awards were hoping to produce an awards show featuring all the elegance and decorum that were our imaginary hallmarks in the pre-COVID-19 era. Then Will Smith smacked Chris Rock at the Oscars. Just like that, everything changed.

We've had to beef up our make-believe security team and pay much closer attention to seating charts that don't actually exist. It wouldn't do for Nick Saban and Jimbo Fisher to wind up at the same table, if we actually had tables.

So, with hopes of avoiding another showdown like Smith's palm vs. Rock's jaw, we give you the 10th annual Newby Awards, a look at everything from the wacky to the inspiring to the infuriating in the world of sports. We've only got one request.

No slapping, please!

BEST GAMER

If you've ever played a video game and wondered if your craziest move would actually work in real time, we give you Ross Chastain. The NASCAR driver was on the verge of missing a spot in the championship finale when he remembered racing stock cars on GameCube with his brother, Chad, as a kid.

Specifically, a move where you plastered the car against the outside wall, let go of the steering wheel and pushed the pedal to the floor. It worked just like it did in the video game. Suddenly, on the final half-lap at the Martinsville short track, Chastain's car looked as if it was turned up to hyper-speed while everyone else was poking along.

Going at least 50 mph faster than everyone else, he passed five cars in a matter of seconds to claim the final spot in the title race.

"Played a lot of NASCAR 2005 on the GameCube with Chad growing up," Chastain said. "I never knew if it would actually work." Alas, he didn't go on



Phil Mickelson lines up a shot on the 18th hole during the first round of the Bedminster Invitational LIV Golf tournament in Bedminster, N.J., July 29, 2022.

Associated Press

to win the Cup championship. But Chastain will long be remembered for one of the most daring driving displays in NASCAR history.

PROFILE IN COURAGE

With his time as one of boxing's most fearsome competitors behind him, Vitali Klitschko is taking on the toughest fight of his life.

Mayor of Kyiv. The 51-year-old former heavyweight champion has showed his steely resolve while starting down a Russian invasion that has pummeled Ukraine and its capital city. He never backed down with gloves on his hands. He shows that same resolve as a political leader, helping guide a major underdog. "If I tried to explain to you all the challenges that I have, we (would) need weeks," Klitschko told an Associated Press reporter last month. This is what a true hero looks like.

OLYMPIC CHEATING CUP

The Russians have a stranglehold on this award, displaying absolutely no regard for doping rules that might stand in the way of Olympic glory.

At the Beijing Winter Games, they were at it again. Kamila Valieva, a 15-year-old figure skating phenom, tested positive for a banned substance but was still allowed to go for the gold.

It wound up being a dis-

graceful display. The sad little girl buckled under all the scrutiny and criticism, failing to win a medal in women's singles.

While Valieva's collapse was seen as a bit of karma by those who actually follow the rules, it doesn't figure to dissuade the Russians and their nefarious quest for gold at the next Olympics.

CERTIFICATE OF DESPOT

We have a tie for this award.

FIFA was a lock after staging the World Cup in a Middle Eastern country that ignored human rights, mistreated migrant workers, had scant soccer history and was so hot in the summer they had to move the tournament to November and December.

Basically, FINA sent out an application with one requirement, "Show us the money!" Qatar did, and shamefully wound up with the world's biggest sports(washing) event.

The fact that Argentina defeated France in perhaps the most thrilling final in tournament history doesn't lessen the stench of where it was played.

But when it comes to greed, let's not forget Phil Mickelson & Friends at LIV Golf, an upstart tour funded by a seemingly limitless supply of money from Saudi Arabia's repressive rulers.

Lefty acknowledged that the Saudis were "scary," but went to work for them anyway, bringing Dustin Johnson, Patrick Reed, Cameron Smith and others along for the despicable ride.

TEAM OF THE YEAR

Baseball can be a very tedious game. Try telling that to the Savannah Bananas. The barnstorming team based in Georgia's historic coastal city has taken the country by storm, transforming the staid ol' national pastime into something akin to the Harlem Globetrotters with bats and gloves. Nonstop dance routines are performed by players and coaches. The Banana Baby is presented to the crowd like Simba in the "The Lion King." One player takes the field on towering stilts. Others stroll through the stands, doling out roses and tossing T-shirts. Outs are counted when a fan catches a foul ball in the stands. Showboating is encouraged at every opportunity.

Somewhere in there is a baseball game, though it can't go longer than two hours. "We're not in the baseball business. We're in the entertainment business," says Bananas owner Jesse Cole, who is always easy to spot in his yellow tuxedo.

IZZY APPRECIATION AWARD

Izzy, the ill-fated Atlanta Olympic mascot, could finally hold his computer-generated, bug-eyed blob of a head up high again after all these years.

When the 2024 Paris Games unveiled their mascots a pair of French Revolution-era caps Izzy was no longer the worst symbol in Olympic history. When given his statuette, Izzy revealed a wry sense of humor. "Wha-tizit?" he asked.

THE HUMAN FUND

For this prize, we're making a donation to George Costanza's made-up charity in honor of the sports figure who actually proved to be human in 2022. Tom Brady. His seemingly perfect life showed plenty of cracks, from a playoff loss to an aborted retirement to a glamorous marriage that, sadly, ended in divorce.

And now, Brady is the quarterback of a middling Buccaneers squad that might just be the first of his amazing 23-year career to finish with a losing record.

He even lost to a team quarterbacked by someone named Brock Purdy, by the humiliating score of 35-7.

AWARD REVOKED

While we're on the subject of Brady, we'd like to take a moment to strip his longtime former coach, Bill Belichick, of whatever genius awards he might have received over the years.

Sure, Belichick is closing in on becoming the winningest coach in NFL history. But, on the final play of a tie game in Las Vegas, he apparently signed off on the ludicrous decision to recklessly toss the ball around like it was an offer to get in on cryptocurrency. The Raiders picked off a backward throw and stunningly took it the other way for the winning touchdown. There have been plenty of highlights over Belichick's long career.

This was undoubtedly as low as he's ever gone. With that, we'll bring down the curtain on another Newby Awards.

Thankfully, it appears no one is leaving with a slap-print across the cheek. □

Weekly SPECIALS



Plantain (Banana)

\$0.51

Each



Grapes Red Seedless

WAS \$7.45

\$5.71

Per KG



Tenderloin Brasil

WAS \$25.14

\$22.85

Per KG



Kraft Real Mayo Original 30oz

WAS \$7.25

\$5.71

Each



Sla-vinken

WAS \$8.57

\$5.71

Per KG



Halskarbonade

WAS \$7.37

\$5.71

Per KG



Lays Stax Sour Cream & Onion Chips 5.5oz

WAS \$2.79

\$2.28

Each



WAS \$4.11

\$2.97

Each



Bumble Bee Chunk Light Tuna in water 5oz

\$1.50

Each



Kellogg's Rice Krispies Cereal

WAS \$7.99

\$6.85

Each



EE Waffle Cones 12ct

WAS \$4.22

\$3.71

Each



Kool-Aid Drink Mix Tropical Punch 18oz

WAS \$4.62

\$3.99

Each



WAS \$1.11

\$0.91

Each



Badia Complete Seasoning 9oz

\$3.42

Each

DAIRY/FROZEN



Belgioioso La Bottega American Grana 5oz

WAS \$4.79

\$3.99

Each



EE Veg Broccoli Cuts 32oz

WAS \$5.11

\$4.28

Each

HBC/GM



Irish Spring Moisture Blast/Aloe 2PK 3.2oz

WAS \$2.05

\$1.71

Each



Gwoon Keukenpapier 3 Laags Decor 6st

WAS \$5.14

\$4.57

Each

DELI/BAKERY



Black Forest Ham

WAS \$1.80

\$1.54

100 GR



Mozzarella Loaf

WAS \$1.48

\$1.14

100 GR

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